

Chapter No. 2098

19/SS02/R476

LR 17B/LR

***SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 541***

Originated in Senate _____ Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 541

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND HONORING THE CIVIL RIGHTS LEGACY OF DR. EDGAR E. SMITH OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI.

WHEREAS, we join the Mississippi Blues Commission and its Musician Benevolent Fund Program in honoring the cultural and civil rights legacy of Dr. Edgar E. Smith of Jackson, Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Edgar E. Smith, Ph.D, was born in Hollandale, Mississippi. In 1951, he graduated from Bowman High School, Vicksburg, Mississippi. His postsecondary education includes a Bachelor of Science Degree (1955) from Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, Mississippi, and a Master of Science Degree (1957) and Ph.D Degrees in Biochemistry (1959) from Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Smith has had a very impressive career in Biochemistry. His research was in the areas of cancer biochemistry and sickle cell anemia, the results of which have been published in several professional journals. He is a member

of the Mississippi Blues Commission and a former member of the Board of Directors of the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center. He has been married to the former Inez Oree' Wiley for the past 60 years and they are the proud parents of four sons; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Cultural Heritage Foundation (SCHF) has honored Dr. Smith for his association with the Mississippi Blues Commission and how Mississippians can help promote the blues. Many of the most important historical sites associated with the blues are located in Mississippi, and the state's Blues Trail, established in 2005, has to date erected nearly 200 Blues Trail Markers documenting this cultural significance. "If you actually experience going around to some of these communities," says Dr. Edgar Smith, "you see that there are a number of these blues musicians who are really in need of support, and we decided that we needed to do something in Mississippi somewhat similar to what's done in Memphis with the Blues Foundation. We felt that Mississippi, being the 'Home of the Blues', should have something of that nature to support its musicians." So in 2010, the Mississippi Blues Commission set up a committee, and Dr. Smith was asked to be Chairman. This committee created the Blues Musicians Benevolent Fund which is supported primarily by the sale of Mississippi Blues Trail license plates, a \$10,000.00 yearly gift from the Mississippi Blues Marathon, and private donations; and

WHEREAS, although Dr. Smith spent much of his life as a Biochemist Researcher and Professor in Boston, Massachusetts, he

has returned to his hometown to retire and enjoy life. "I am a native of the Mississippi Delta. I have been involved in the blues all of my life. I grew up next to the biggest juke joint in town and those are the people with whom I grew up." Dr. Smith's heart is in the blues. Wishing to help these ailing musicians, he took the leadership role with the Fund Committee and said, "The group has been outstanding." The Mississippi Blues Marathon grants \$10,000.00 each year to the Benevolent Fund. "This has been a tremendous help and we are extremely grateful to BlueCross BlueShield. This is a way for people to directly benefit our Blues Musicians. What a wonderful way to support the musicians who so beautifully express their life stories through the blues"; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Edgar Smith, as Chairman of the Blues Benevolent Committee, has stated, "As a son of the Delta, I am keenly aware of the challenges that confront these artists on a daily basis. Many blues musicians, especially the older ones, have no health insurance and no other source of income other than what they get from blues gigs. It's appropriate for Mississippi to have some mechanism for assisting the people from whom the blues derived. The Benevolence Fund represents the effort on the part of the Mississippi Blues Commission and the Mississippi Blues Foundation to address this issue"; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Smith has kindly participated in the "Memories of the Civil Rights Era Recording Sessions" moderated and

sponsored by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Dr. Smith was a student at Tougaloo College so he was well aware of the gravity of the Supreme Court decisions regarding public school and university integration. His wife was from Oxford and the couple was exposed to the effects of the Meredith decision because her father owned the only black-owned business on the Oxford square. He experienced the effects of the Civil Rights Movement in Lexington, Massachusetts, while he worked in the Boston area and he has a handwritten letter from Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer thanking the Smiths for their support of the Movement. They knew the Freedom Riders from Tougaloo and the couple returned to Mississippi at the time the Freedom Riders were honored by the college. Dr. Smith supports Mississippi because it is beautiful and it is his "home." He recognizes the importance of self-help projects in the North and in the South; and

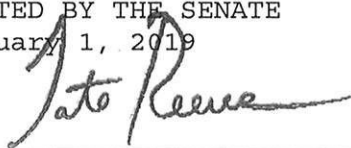
WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we pay tribute to a most public-spirited citizen of Mississippi whose legacy of leadership and dedication is an example to all in our state:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize the cultural contributions and honor the civil rights legacy of Dr. Edgar E. Smith of Jackson, Mississippi, and extend our best wishes to Dr. Smith and his family.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Dr. Edgar Smith and his family, forwarded to the Mississippi Blues

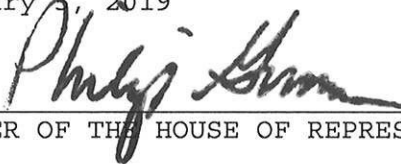
Commission and the Mississippi Blues Foundation, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 1, 2019

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Tate Reeves", written over a horizontal line.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 5, 2019

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Philip Green", written over a horizontal line.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES